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**OPERATIONAL FAILURES CAUSED BY ARROGANT LEADERS**

**by**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

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## **Abstract**

### *Operational Failures Caused by Arrogant Leaders*

The Japanese defeat at Midway and the U.S. occupational failure in Iraq resulted from operational blindness on the part of arrogant strategic leaders. The failures of the Japanese and U.S. militaries directly resulted from the professional arrogance exhibited by Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld as they deliberately limited the scope of their strategic thinking to how their own forces would be employed, exclusive of the combat potential available to their enemy. Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld insisted on complete control and created environments where their highly capable and informed subordinates were either isolated from the decision-making process or not included at all. They were similarly contemptuous of their foe and uncritical of their own capabilities. Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld made the mistake of confusing great power with unlimited power, failed to recognize that their positions were subordinate to a greater goal, and ultimately lost perspective on the limits of their power.

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's failure to defeat the U.S. Pacific Fleet during the battle of Midway was the event that precipitated the eventual defeat of the Japanese Combined Fleet in the Pacific theater during World War II. Fresh off a resounding victory over the U.S. Navy at Pearl Harbor, Admiral Yamamoto was very near achieving complete dominance in the Pacific as well as validating to his detractors the preeminence of his carriers as the decisive weapon in naval warfare. All he needed to do, was find and finish the U.S. Pacific Fleet's carriers. Sailing boldly into the Central Pacific Ocean with the most powerful fleet known to man, Admiral Yamamoto found the U.S. carriers, but instead of destroying them, the strength of his Combined Fleet - four fast carriers - were sent to the bottom of the Central Pacific Ocean and the Japanese Navy was never again capable of a strategic offensive.<sup>1</sup> Sixty years later, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's failure in Iraq led to a campaign that continues to this day. He set out to demonstrate to his detractors that his ideas for transforming the U.S. military from a Cold War-based force (focused on combined arms battles) into a strategically nimble force (characterized by organizations that could deploy rapidly and win through technological superiority) was the correct course for the United States. Secretary Rumsfeld's concept for waging war gained traction during the rapid victory over the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001-2002. The Taliban was swiftly routed by small organizations using technology that brought firepower to bear at decisive times and places. For operations in Iraq, Secretary Rumsfeld insisted that the enemy could be brought to heel with a smaller, lighter force than those envisioned in standing contingency plans. A quick, resounding victory in Iraq would be the final proof needed to convince his detractors that his concept of technologically superior warfare was correct for any contingency or crisis.<sup>2</sup> In 2008, that victory Secretary Rumsfeld sought remains elusive. What is the relationship

between Admiral Yamamoto in 1942 and Secretary Rumsfeld in 2003? I suggest-the operational debilitating human quality of “arrogance”.

The Japanese defeat at Midway and the U.S. occupational failure in Iraq resulted from operational blindness on the part of arrogant strategic leaders. The failures of the Japanese and U.S. militaries directly resulted from the professional arrogance exhibited by Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld as they deliberately limited the scope of their strategic thinking to how their own forces would be employed, exclusive of the combat potential available to their enemy.

This paper will explore the nature of operational arrogance, the requirements placed upon the strategic leader in the strategic environment, a brief comparison of the leadership characteristics of Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld-specifically arrogance and conclude with how that arrogance blinded these two great leaders from being effective in the strategic and theater strategic environment. In conclusion this paper will offer ways to guard against arrogance influencing strategic or military leaders’ operational design.

Before beginning, one must first ask “Why compare Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld as opposed to Admiral Yamamoto and General Franks?” Simply put, Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld were the central figures who dominated the development of the strategies that failed at Midway and Iraq, respectively. While General Franks was responsible for developing and executing the Iraq campaign plan, his efforts were largely hampered by the constantly changing planning guidance that he received from Secretary Rumsfeld. As a result, the resulting operational design for Operation Iraqi Freedom bore a greater faithfulness to Rumsfeld’s vision rather than the operational genius of Franks.<sup>3</sup> It was Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld that disregarded established strategic

planning protocols, short-circuited proven analytic processes, and isolated the collective intellectual wisdom of the Japanese Naval Staff and U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, respectively from contributing to the development of the cohesive strategy. Their strategic reasoning was flawed by their own arrogance.

Arrogance is a dangerous trait, and when arrogance is manifested in an individual who is responsible for the judicious use of national resources, the results can be crippling. J. William Fulbright discusses the quality of arrogance in his book *The Arrogance of Power*. In one particularly powerful passage he describes how “great power can be confused with unlimited power and great responsibility with total responsibility.”<sup>4</sup> Fulbright continues to discuss how the arrogant, “can admit no error, and must win every argument, no matter how trivial,”<sup>5</sup> and he concludes by stating that “for lack of appreciation of how truly powerful it is the nation begins to lose wisdom and perspective.”<sup>6</sup> This is a powerful passage because it establishes why arrogance is so dangerous and how the manifestation of this quality can lead to an environment where only one point of view is valid, alternate views are considered as dissent or disloyal, and complex issues that require a broad, inclusive approach to problem solving are viewed through the very narrow lens of the power holder. In the strategic environment, loss of wisdom and perspective can lead to disastrous results through the misapplication of resources. Arrogant leaders are dangerous because they will overextend themselves as a result of their high belief that they are right and all others are wrong, and this leads them to lose perspective on their actual power.<sup>7</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Merriam Webster’s Dictionary* formally define arrogance as, “having an unwarrantable claim in respect of one’s own importance,”<sup>8</sup> having “an attitude of superiority manifested in an overbearing manner,”<sup>9</sup> and having “an undue assumption of dignity, authority, or

knowledge.”<sup>10</sup> Were Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld guilty of this sin? Did arrogance cause them to lose perspective of their actual power in relation to their real responsibilities?

Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld were responsible for executing their respective country’s war strategies. They were responsible for leading large and diverse organizations in a complex and changing environment. In his paper that discusses strategic leadership, W. Michael Guillot writes about strategic leadership in dynamic environments and contends that to be effective, strategic leaders must “realize that broad perspectives help eliminate ambiguity and lead to effective strategic decisions.”<sup>11</sup> Guillot continues by stating that to be effective, strategic leaders require vision, should be transformational, need to anticipate change, be critical thinkers, foster an attitude of creativity, know how to build consensus, and know how to negotiate effectively<sup>12</sup>—nowhere in his reading is “arrogance” considered a valuable trait. He concludes by stating “this kind of success is directly related to the cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural communications ability of the leader.”<sup>13</sup>

By the time Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld occupied their strategic leadership positions, both had established themselves as aggressive leaders and innovative thinkers. If these two leadership characteristics had been blended with the ability to build consensus and communicate across the strategic leadership environment, then Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld could have achieved success in the fast changing environments in which they led, but that was not to be the case.<sup>14</sup> Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld achieved their positions because they had been successful throughout their careers, making substantial contributions in their respective fields that required many of the qualities described by Guillot. Admiral Yamamoto had been involved in the Washington

and London Naval Treaties, drove the Japanese Navy to embrace the aircraft carrier as the decisive naval weapon, and had opposed Japan's alliance with Germany.<sup>15</sup> Secretary Rumsfeld made contributions to national security and industry as a Representative to the House of Congress, as a cabinet member, the White House Chief of Staff, U.S. Ambassador to NATO, and a chief executive officer in the private sector.<sup>16</sup> Yet, both appeared to fail in their final assignments because of their inability to recognize that the operational environments for Midway and Iraq were markedly different than they were for Pearl Harbor and Afghanistan, and because it appeared that they failed to foster an attitude of creativity, build consensus, and allow anyone to challenge the validity of their views, concepts, and assumptions.<sup>17</sup>

Both men possessed high intelligence and a strong will to achieve what they set out to accomplish. Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld possessed strategic vision, and both can be correctly credited as the catalyst for transformation of their organizations. Both men foresaw the evolving nature of the strategic threat to their country and developed innovative concepts for their organizations to adapt to and remain relevant. Admiral Yamamoto was a fierce proponent for converting the navy from a battleship focused fleet to an aircraft carrier focused fleet. He based his concept on initial observations he made as a student at Harvard during World War I, and continued to refine it throughout his career.<sup>18</sup> When he was Vice Minister of the Japanese Navy, Admiral Yamamoto argued with members of the Naval Staff that, "in modern warfare battleships would be as useful as a samurai sword."<sup>19</sup> Secretary Rumsfeld was similarly forward thinking throughout his career and he recognized the "danger of terrorism and the need for policies to counter it."<sup>20</sup> He further recognized that the U.S. military was organized, equipped, and trained to fight in the defunct cold war.<sup>21</sup>



Secretary Rumsfeld was also an important voice in the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) arguments. He was a member of the Ballistic Missile Defense Commission that emphasized “precision-guided munitions, stealth technology, and space-based equipment for command and control, communications, surveillance, and reconnaissance.”<sup>22</sup> He was a man focused on pulling resources together to achieve a goal.<sup>23</sup> Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld’s drive to impose their will upon others to accept their vision would become dangerous when their arrogance mixed with the tradition bound organizations they led.

Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld’s passion for transforming their organizations was exacerbated by their dominant personalities. Their overwhelming presence muted alternate views within the Japanese Navy and the U.S. Department of Defense, specifically the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Admiral Yamamoto and his staff were considered by Japanese General Headquarters to have “a bit of an attitude problem,”<sup>24</sup> and Admiral Yamamoto was considered through his actions as someone who “destroyed the checks and balances within the Navy’s policymaking processes.”<sup>25</sup> He led by intimidation, did not accept criticism, and liked original thinking-provided it was his own or from someone he could manipulate.<sup>26</sup> During Secretary Rumsfeld’s tenure as the 21<sup>st</sup> Secretary of Defense, he was known to be “rude, abrasive, and relied heavily on a small group of advisers, in many cases with few or no military officers present.”<sup>27</sup> Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld bore the weight of defeating their nation’s enemies, and they were entrusted with the power necessary to achieve results consistent with national objectives. Their hubris, however, caused them to believe that the power they wielded justified their refusal to coordinate and communicate effectively within their organizations.<sup>28</sup>

Prior to the Midway and Iraq campaigns, Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld oversaw operations that had partially validated their transformational concepts. The success of the Japanese at Pearl Harbor, and the U.S. military in Afghanistan were testaments to their vision and insistence on change to remain relevant. Both men had demonstrated their will to overcome significant obstacles to achieve their goals. In Admiral Yamamoto's case he overcame the "strong opposition of the Naval General Staff,"<sup>29</sup> and Secretary Rumsfeld was key in developing a strategy that moved Special Operations Forces into Afghanistan quickly to support the Afghan militia with U.S. strengths—technology.<sup>30</sup> To Secretary Rumsfeld, the success achieved by the Special Operations Forces in Afghanistan cemented his notion that large, slow to deploy combat formations should be replaced by lighter, more mobile forces capable of rapid deployment that can engage the enemy with accurate precision weapons, and avoid the requirement to engage in close combat.<sup>31</sup> As a result of these two operations, both men became even more influential and solidified their control within their respective governments in the development of the follow-on campaigns at Midway and in Iraq.<sup>32</sup>

In Japan, the Imperial Headquarters, and the subordinate Naval General Staff, were responsible for developing strategy.<sup>33</sup> The U.S. Central Command was the responsible headquarters for developing contingency plans involving Iraq. By 1943, the reality in Japan was, "all future war planning depended upon Yamamoto . . . Yamamoto and his officers shaped future fleet plans."<sup>34</sup> In the post Afghanistan environment of 2002, Secretary Rumsfeld drove the planning. According to Dale Herspring:

He provided [General] Franks with 'talking points'. . . They made clear how the secretary expected the war in Iraq to be fought. Franks could work out the details himself, but in a military sense, Rumsfeld was interfering all the way down to tactical

level-telling Franks how to deploy and maneuver his troops. Rumsfeld was going to be overall in charge.<sup>35</sup>

While it is not unusual or even wrong that a dominant person figures heavily in the development of strategy during war, it is important to recognize how the personalities, specifically the trait of arrogance, of these two leaders influenced the development of the Midway and Iraq campaigns and led to avoidably shameful results.

Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld believed, respectively, that they had achieved easy victories at Pearl Harbor and in Afghanistan because of their intellectually superior concepts. In preparation for the Midway and Iraq campaigns, they directed planning efforts that relied on assumptions that were either never validated or were discarded as inconvenient. Both men viewed their recent successes as validation of the superiority of their vision and, instead of conducting a rigorous debate and analysis of the new problems before them, they applied the same construct to a changed or different enemy. Admiral Yamamoto's arrogance resulted in the development of a battle plan that rendered most of his fleet useless.<sup>36</sup> Secretary Rumsfeld's arrogance caused him to focus almost singularly on his own force structure for the invasion at the exclusion of developing a plan that achieved the nation's stated objectives.<sup>37</sup>

Admiral Yamamoto's arrogance was based on the presumption that the U.S. Pacific Fleet was already beaten<sup>38</sup> and all that was required was to draw the American carriers out to complete their destruction.<sup>39</sup> Admiral Yamamoto did not address the potential of the U.S. Fleet, when he failed to account for his enemies' will to fight,<sup>40</sup> which led him to make errors in calculating the organization and employment of his forces.<sup>41</sup> Admiral Yamamoto's disregard for American fighting spirit clouded his risk assessment and led him to weaken his

force by sending valuable assets against secondary objectives—forces that should have been concentrating against the American carriers.<sup>42</sup>

Leadership faults and traits are observable and are likely to be imitated by subordinates. This is what happened to Admiral Yamamoto's Combined Fleet Staff when they assembled to conduct the pre-Midway war-game. According to Parshall and Tully, instead of using the war games as an analytic tool to validate assumptions and test the validity of the operational design, Admiral Yamamoto and his staff treated this important event as merely a pro forma step they must complete before setting sail.<sup>43</sup> In fact, "Yamamoto and his staff were engaged in being actively disingenuous."<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, according to Parshall and Tully, rulings inconsistent with Japanese expectations were dismissed, and enemy tactics were designed to fit Admiral Yamamoto's vision of how the battle would unfold. The result of the war games would lead to the sailing of the greatest fleet ever assembled with a fatally flawed plan.<sup>45</sup>

If Admiral Yamamoto's arrogance affected the development of his Midway campaign plan, it also contributed to a more serious outcome for the Japanese war strategy. Admiral Yamamoto was so convinced that his strategy would destroy the U.S. Pacific Fleet's carrier force and result in the United States suing for peace that he failed to recognize that he was exceeding his responsibility as the operational commander by committing his fleet to an operation inconsistent with national objectives and strategy.<sup>46</sup> According to Parshall and Tully, "the Japanese were guilty of ignoring various warning signs that manifested themselves from the time of Coral Sea onward."<sup>47</sup> Instead of evaluating the events of the Coral Sea in light of American fighting capability and spirit, Yamamoto dismissed this action as merely a nuisance.<sup>48</sup> Admiral Yamamoto was not concerned about the appearance of the

American carriers in the Coral Sea, and that they had fought fairly well, because he thought both the carriers had been sunk.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, he seemed to have disregarded the larger Japanese war strategy. According to Wood, “The Japanese war strategy was essentially defensive. The initial attacks on U.S. and European possessions were simply meant to ‘create breathing space’ while Japanese forces built up defenses to resist a U.S. and Allied counter attack.”<sup>50</sup> Admiral Yamamoto’s arrogance cost him the offensive arm of his Combined Fleet and cost the Japanese valuable time to consolidate their significant gains, conserve resources, and prepare to defend against the inevitable American counter-attack.<sup>51</sup>

The arrogance associated with Secretary Rumsfeld’s approach to the planning for the invasion of Iraq has roots in the manner that he approached implementing his concept for transformation when he arrived at the Pentagon—in fact they are inexorably linked. Secretary Rumsfeld, like Admiral Yamamoto, was so convinced of the superiority of his knowledge that he “ignored military advice on the implementation of security policy.”<sup>52</sup> This is a telling statement because this is precisely how Secretary Rumsfeld approached planning for the invasion of Iraq. Just as he had pushed forward his concept for transformation, Secretary Rumsfeld advanced his own ideas on how to fight in Iraq while isolating the uniformed professionals on the Joint Staff from the decision making process.<sup>53</sup> His abandonment of conventional models for preparing for war facilitated the introduction of numerous unorthodox ideas into the Central Command’s planning process that reduced the time available to develop a complete and comprehensive plan.<sup>54</sup> Secretary Rumsfeld’s extreme self-confidence led him to believe that the leaner, more lethal, U.S. military he sought to create<sup>55</sup> was the correct tool to fight a war, regardless of the operational conditions or

objectives. Although the invasion of Iraq achieved regime change, the enemy remains undefeated and the strategic objectives remain unfulfilled.<sup>56</sup>

Secretary Rumsfeld's concept for transformational war was not a strategy to focus on an enemy, rather, it was an internally focused concept to create a specific capability within the U.S. military.<sup>57</sup> Secretary Rumsfeld was committed to seeing his transformation of the U.S. military succeed as well as going forward with using the concept in Iraq even though he was fully aware of the possibility that the U.S. military commitment in Iraq could last up to 10 years.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, he was aware of the likelihood that the military would need to defeat the Iraqi armed forces, control the population, and secure the nation<sup>59</sup> as a result of the initial briefings he received from the Joint Staff. Secretary Rumsfeld, like Admiral Yamamoto, made the error of wishing away enemy capability or potential. In his unwarranted belief of the superiority of U.S. capability,<sup>60</sup> he could not bring himself to believe "that it would take more forces to secure the country than it would to defeat its army."<sup>61</sup>

Secretary Rumsfeld's failure to listen to his uniformed commanders led to mistakes in Iraq.<sup>62</sup> His arrogance, blinded him to developing a plan that supported achieving the strategic objectives which included: "eliminating Iraq's WMD production and delivery capability, denying Saddam Hussein the opportunity to break out of containment, removing Iraq as a threat to its neighbors, liberating the Iraqi people from tyranny and assisting them in creating a society based on moderation, pluralism, and democracy, and preventing Baghdad from supporting terrorists."<sup>63</sup> Instead of developing a campaign that addressed all of the strategic objectives, he chose to attack Baghdad as if that would seal the victory.<sup>64</sup> He was focused singularly on regime change<sup>65</sup> to the exclusion of potential post-invasion developments

which he considered someone else's issue.<sup>66</sup> Consequently, Secretary Rumsfeld's discussions with General Franks regarding the plan to invade Iraq centered on the size of the ground invasion force.<sup>67</sup> Secretary Rumsfeld was internally focused and did not pay attention to achieving the strategic objective because of his "determination to make Iraq the first transformational war."<sup>68</sup> He failed to "adequately consider the strategic questions and had an overly simplistic conception of the war which led to a cascading undercutting of the war effort: too few troops, too little coordination with civilian and governmental/non-governmental agencies, and too little time allotted to achieve success."<sup>69</sup>

In addition to being aware of the likelihood for a U.S. military commitment beyond regime removal, Secretary Rumsfeld failed to follow his own advice. Upon arrival to the Pentagon, Secretary Rumsfeld "underscored the need to be prepared for the unexpected and that success depended on agility: the ability to adjust the battle plan in the face of threats that could be neither predicted nor foreseen."<sup>70</sup>

Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld failed in their roles as strategic leaders because their arrogance blinded them to their true responsibilities. They failed to recognize the evolving nature of their environments, and, by insisting on complete control created environments where their highly capable and informed subordinates were either isolated from the decision-making process or not included at all.<sup>71</sup> Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld were similarly contemptuous of their foe and uncritical of their own capabilities. This led them to design campaigns that, although bold, were fundamentally flawed. Their unwarranted presumption in their positions led both men to misidentify objectives, squander resources, and fail to achieve their nations' objectives. Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld made the mistake of confusing great power with unlimited power, failed to

recognize that their positions were subordinate to a greater goal, and ultimately lost perspective on the limits of their power.

Admiral Yamamoto arrogantly used his prestige to force an ill-conceived plan on the Japanese Naval Staff. He failed to apply mass, because he did not respect his enemy; he did not prepare during the Fleet war game, because the plan was his and he could do no wrong. In doing so, he failed to set the conditions for his subordinate commanders to succeed, when contact was made with the enemy.<sup>72</sup> Secretary Rumsfeld failed because he would not listen. He either did not listen or did not seek the advice of the uniformed professionals on his staff. He remained focused on how the objective was achieved, rather than focusing on achieving the right objectives. He was committed to proving his concept of transformation without due regard for the enemy or the strategic environment. His arrogance led him to approach the Iraqi enemy in cold war terms – the exact antithesis of his transformational concept. He viewed the Iraqi enemy as a formation that could be identified, targeted, and destroyed, not the cunning terrorist threat he cautioned about earlier in his career.

Could something have been done to combat Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld's arrogance that would have prevented the Midway and Iraq failures? Perhaps, but given the environments at the time, both men had political clout as a result of previous operations, so it is unlikely that their overbearing manner was even recognized as arrogance. Were there signs that Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld were exceeding the limits of their power? Admiral Yamamoto was clearly focused on using his naval striking power to take the fight to his enemy, to expand the Japanese security zone, but the time for his bold offensives had passed. The Japanese strategy had shifted to the strategic defensive. Admiral Yamamoto either failed to recognize that, or ignored it in order to achieve his goal of



destroying the American carriers in the Pacific. While it may be debatable if Admiral Yamamoto was in compliance with his country's strategic goals, it is not debatable that he believed he was fighting an inferior enemy. His preparations for Midway reflect that and are borne out in his flawed plan.

Secretary Rumsfeld was focused on defeating the Iraqi regime, rather than achieving all the goals established by the National Security Council. His focus on the size of the force to invade Iraq, and his failure to account for the enemy potential (despite being briefed previously that regime removal would not be the final act in this play) suggest that he was deliberately limiting the ways in which the U.S. could achieve its goals. Without question, Secretary Rumsfeld wanted to use the Iraq campaign as the crowning jewel of his concept for transformation. Post hostility operations did not fit conveniently into this calculation.

How do we learn from the mistakes made by Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld? Arrogance is a trait that is centered on self. In a profession that requires an external focus on the threat or potential threat, one cannot tolerate individuals who become inwardly focused. Professional military officers must be aware of the signs that indicate a failure to orient on the enemy. These signs include truncation or elimination of accepted processes such as planning models and war gaming, and isolation of a large percentage of the professional body of knowledge. One may not be able to modify the behavior of an arrogant leader, but one should be aware of the signs, and take measures to limit the potential damage. The measure most readily available to the military professional is the ability to argue within the context of the operational art. If one must contend with an arrogant leader the best method to convince that individual he or she is missing the mark, is to provide facts and data from previous operations or campaigns that support a more realistic view. Armed with an

iron-clad logical argument, the military professional *may* succeed in turning around a potentially fatal engagement concept. Operational art provides the military professional with the tools to structure his or her argument in an attempt to sway an arrogant leader to find merit in alternate and more realistic points of view. There is a second measure available to the military professional to limit the impact of arrogant leaders, and that is moral courage. If the logical argument approach fails to sway the arrogant leader, then the military professional has a legal and moral responsibility to inform the chain of command that the leader's arrogance is creating unnecessary risks that are likely to make poor use of resources, and impact the accomplishment of the objectives. The stakes are far too great to accept a strategy of waiting for an arrogant leader to leave his post or be relieved.

There is a fine line between confidence and arrogance. We have every right to expect those leaders responsible for designing and executing campaigns to do so confidently because they have applied the mental rigor to the development of their plans, and have taken into account the strategic objectives and desired end state. We also have every right to expect those leaders recognize warfare as among the most complex environments, and that achieving success in that environment requires a degree of consensus and humility to strike a balance in achieving all the nations objectives, not just some of them. Admiral Yamamoto and Secretary Rumsfeld failed in their responsibilities because they could not envision a definition of success that included models separate from their own. Both men were capable, but were focused internally on their own capabilities because they did not respect others – including the enemy. Arrogance in business, or arrogance by military leaders during peacetime, may be inconvenient, but arrogance by military leaders during war results in

dismissing your enemy. And failing to account for your enemy will most assuredly lead to a humbling experience.

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